United Nations A/73/383

General Assembly

Distr.: General
17 September 2018

Original: English

Seventy-third session
Item 25 (b) of the provisional agenda*
Operational activities for development: South-South cooperation for development

Role of South-South cooperation and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Challenges and opportunities

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is being submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 71/244 of 21 December 2016, and to resolution 71/318 of 28 August 2017, by which the Assembly decided to convene a second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation at the highest possible level, and that the Conference would be held in Buenos Aires from 20 to 22 March 2019. The scope of the Conference will be to review the trends in South-South and triangular cooperation, including the progress made by the international community, in particular the United Nations, in supporting and promoting such cooperation and identifying new opportunities, as well as challenges and suggestions to overcome them. In order to inform discussions at the Conference, the present report reviews the implementation of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action since its inception by Member States, United Nations system entities and other stakeholders. In keeping with the overarching theme of the Conference, "Role of South-South cooperation and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, challenges and opportunities", as well as the sub-themes, the report also reviews actions at the national, regional, interregional and global levels. Against the background of lessons learned over the past 40 years, the report highlights key priorities for South-South cooperation in the years ahead.

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18-15400 (E) 041018

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I. Introduction

1. The Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (A/CONF.79/13/Rev.1, chap. I), adopted in 1978 at the United Nations Conference on Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries, provided countries of the South with a framework to reinforce their cooperation among them with a view to collective self-reliance, which would allow them to achieve their development goals and to reduce poverty through mutual assistance and solidarity. Forty years later, South-South cooperation has increased in relevance as an important modality of international cooperation for sustainable development, as its scale, scope and the number of actors involved have expanded.

2. In 2015, the international community adopted an ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which recognizes the salient role of South-South cooperation in achieving its goals and targets. Major frameworks, including the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework, have also given new impetus to South-South and triangular cooperation.

3. The second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, occurring some 40 years after the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, will give the international community the opportunity to review trends, assess progress to date in furthering development, review lessons learned in South-South and triangular cooperation and identify new opportunities offered by those modalities of cooperation to achieve the 2030 Agenda and other internationally agreed development goals.

4. The growing importance and contribution of South-South cooperation to the internationally agreed development goals has been driven by the significant gains achieved by many developing countries. Today, South-South cooperation is contributing to the transformation of the norms and principles of international cooperation.

5. It is against that backdrop that the second United Nations High-Level Conference on South-South Cooperation will take place in Buenos Aires from 20 to 22 March 2019.

6. In the lead up to the Conference, I offer the following overarching observations:

(a) The international cooperation landscape has witnessed important changes in recent decades, characterized by the increasing importance of South-South cooperation at the subregional, regional and interregional levels;

(b) The enhanced productive capacities of developing countries and their implementation of successful public policies in the economic, social, scientific and technological sectors have had a positive impact on trade, financial flows, technological capabilities and economic growth in the countries of the South and globally;

(c) The determination of Southern actors to promote partnerships through mutual learning and the sharing of knowledge, experience and best practices, highlights the importance of South-South cooperation in addressing persistent development challenges towards achieving the 2030 Agenda;

(d) There still remain gaps in assessment of and reporting on the impact of South-South and triangular cooperation for sustainable development. Moreover, the national reporting mechanisms that are in place often adopt different approaches and methodologies, making it difficult to draw cross-country comparisons. It is important, in that context, to bring coherence to the reporting mechanisms so as to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and experiences and promote partnerships;

(e) The growing role of South-South cooperation and its increased complexity should be matched with critical institutional arrangements at the national, regional,

inter-regional and global levels. That should be one of the key areas of reflection during the Conference.

II. Conceptual framework for South-South cooperation

7. South-South cooperation is a broad framework for collaboration among countries of the South in the political, economic, social, cultural, environmental and technical domains. It is managed by developing countries themselves, with active participation from Governments, public and private sector actors, academia and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) among others.

Historical context

8. Commitment to collective development, the promotion of human freedom, opposition to colonialism and the creation of equitable conditions for the peaceful and harmonious socioeconomic development of all countries have been key to the genesis and evolution of South-South cooperation. Thus, historically, South-South cooperation has been characterized by in-kind partnership and building on common development needs, perspectives and approaches.

9. Once largely confined to capacity-building, South-South cooperation is now being enriched by an array of different approaches, along with diverse regional dynamics and perspectives.

10. During the Asia-Africa Conference, held in Bandung, Indonesia, from 18 to 24 April 1955, Southern leaders called for structural changes in the world economic order and expressed their willingness to form partnerships to gain more bargaining power on the global stage. A few years later, the establishment of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries in 1961 provided an impetus for cooperation among developing countries. The launch of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in 1964 helped to further consolidate that process.

11. In 1964, the Group of 77 was established to advance the collective economic interests of developing countries and to create an enhanced joint negotiating capacity, including through South-South cooperation. Having since expanded to 134 Member States, the Group of 77 has emerged as a unique platform to advance South-South cooperation.

12. During the 1960s and 1970s, several decisions were taken at the United Nations regarding development in newly independent countries, with the collective aim of achieving self-reliance, economic independence and stronger linkages between the South and the global economy. In pressing for that greater level of autonomy, the Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order was also adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1974 (see Assembly resolution S-6/3201).

13. The Buenos Aires Plan of Action, endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 33/134 of 19 December 1978, articulated the basic principles of interaction and collaboration between countries, including respect for national sovereignty, non-interference in domestic affairs and equal rights. It has also guided developing countries towards strengthening innovative mechanisms to build legal and institutional frameworks, and financing mechanisms at the national, bilateral, regional and multilateral levels.

14. It is important to note that, by the 1970s, developing countries had already identified national interests in trade and investment linked to their collective development priorities. Complementarities in skills and resources were, therefore,

identified as practical modalities for deepening these linkages. The Buenos Aires Plan of Action responded to those needs by proposing the creation of a platform for economic cooperation among developing countries and another platform for technical cooperation among developing countries.

15. In the Ministerial Declaration of the Group of 77 (A/49/462, annex), adopted on 30 September 1994, the ministers for foreign affairs of Group of 77 member States called upon the United Nations to consider convening an international conference on South-South cooperation.

16. Participants in the South Summit, held in Havana from 10 to 14 April 2000, adopted the Declaration of the South Summit, in which the countries of the South expressed their conviction that South-South cooperation was, as a complement to North-South cooperation, an effective instrument for optimizing their potential to promote development through, among other things, the mobilization and sharing of existing resources and expertise. The same conviction was reiterated in the Doha Declaration, adopted at the Second South Summit, held in Doha, from 12 to 16 June 2005, in which the countries of the South called for a more energetic effort to deepen and revitalize South-South cooperation to take advantage of the new geography of international economic relations.

17. The first High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, held in Nairobi from 1 to 3 December 2009 to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, centred on the theme "Promotion of South-South cooperation for development".

18. In the Nairobi outcome document of the High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (General Assembly resolution 64/222, annex), Member States emphasized that South-South cooperation was a manifestation of solidarity among peoples and countries of the South that contributed to their national well-being, their national and collective self-reliance and the attainment of internationally agreed development goals. It was also highlighted therein that South-South cooperation and its agenda had to be set by countries of the South and should continue to be guided by the principles of respect for national sovereignty, national ownership and independence, equality, non-conditionality, non-interference in domestic affairs and mutual benefit. A series of measures to reinvigorate the United Nations development system in supporting and promoting South-South cooperation were also set out therein.

Comparative advantages of South-South and triangular cooperation

19. For many actors involved in South-South cooperation, its main comparative advantage lies in its ability to address the development challenges of Southern countries through an emphasis on shared values within similar development contexts on the basis of mutual interest and understanding. South-South cooperation facilitates a horizontal relationship in which cooperation is built as a partnership between equals.

20. South-South cooperation is a participatory process that promotes the creation of functional development solutions under similar cultural and social circumstances, reflects convergent political and strategic interests and taps locally available capacities and assets.

21. South-South Cooperation is complementary to, and not a substitute for, the responsibilities and capabilities of donor countries. Hence, this modality of cooperation complements and accompanies the efforts of the countries themselves in order to overcome the structural challenges of development in specific areas.

22. South-South cooperation favours ownership by Southern countries, since contexts and social difficulties and challenges are, in most cases, similar and shared among South-South partners. Connected by similar settings and challenges, the

nations of the South are open to cooperating with each other on knowledge-sharing and technology exchange activities, on common technical training programmes and in taking collective action. Consequently, South-South cooperation aims to promote national and collective self-reliance and independence and to reinforce political and cooperative relationships.

23. South-South cooperation allows countries to play an important role as facilitators of cooperation in many different areas, such as institutional strengthening, health, gender equality, climate change, food safety, scientific and technological innovation, infrastructure, trade, finance and investment, and regional integration.

24. South-South cooperation promotes mechanisms for horizontal governance and decision-making. It is a flexible modality for managing and implementing projects and initiatives on demand, with a clear definition of roles and shared responsibilities.

25. South-South cooperation enables developing countries to play a more active role in international policy and decision-making processes, in support of their efforts to achieve sustainable development.

26. South-South cooperation is generally more cost-effective than other modalities of cooperation. It is a vehicle for developing countries to support each other without the need to use a large amount of resources, yet has the potential to have a great impact.

27. Given its comparative advantages, South-South cooperation brings new impetus and an innovative character to cooperation between developing countries since it helps to mobilize alternative financial resources.

28. The comparative advantages of triangular cooperation include: establishing linkages with different partners without the need for negotiating complicated treaties or agreements; making good use of the comparative advantages of different modalities of and actors in development cooperation; and mitigating the lack of coordination between major development cooperation modalities.

29. It is worth noting that triangular cooperation offers opportunities to explore synergies and complementarities between diverse actors and to strengthen the ownership of partners in joint activities.

30. Triangular cooperation is a tool that allows traditional donors and other partners to join South-South initiatives. It is also an alternative way to leverage resources and to involve those actors in technical capacity-building initiatives. Therefore, it represents an opportunity to enhance South-South cooperation through the provision of financial and technical support.

31. In triangular cooperation, all countries can be providers, facilitators and beneficiaries of knowledge-sharing. Thus, it is a modality of partnership that can help to transcend traditional divides between different types of cooperation.[1]

32. Triangular cooperation can open up new opportunities for cooperation, offering a mix of funding and knowledge that would not otherwise be available. The Southern partners gain skills and experience and build their capabilities as new providers of development cooperation. All partners can learn and benefit from triangular cooperation.

[1] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), "Dispelling the myths of triangular cooperation: Evidence from the 2015 OECD survey on triangular cooperation" (Paris, 2016).

III. South-South cooperation and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Trends, opportunities and challenges

A. Trends and opportunities in South-South cooperation

33. South-South cooperation continues to show resilience as it steadily expands and diversifies. Recent years have seen the emergence of new actors, more inclusive partnership arrangements and innovative modalities for development cooperation. Those changes are strengthening development efforts at all levels with a view to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, including combating poverty and hunger, addressing climate change, supporting infrastructure development and advancing humanitarian assistance.

34. A growing number of Southern partners are designing systems and processes to assess the outcomes of their projects and programmes. Together, developing countries are paying heightened attention to the quality, effectiveness and contribution of their development cooperation to sustainable development (see E/2018/55, para. 35).

35. Despite significant economic achievements, countries of the South still face important economic, social and environmental challenges. South-South cooperation is reducing asymmetries in access to development opportunities and responding directly to local demands.

36. Partnerships across the South do not focus exclusively on financial flows, but also on economic cooperation and the exchange of knowledge, experiences and development solutions, which are critical for the South to achieve the 2030 Agenda and other internationally agreed development goals. The innovative development solutions developed by the South can be shared for the benefit of all, thereby leaving no one behind.

37. In the new international context, South-South cooperation allows partners to gain experience on cooperation projects in which all participants have an active role, with a view to creating capacity in order to guarantee that the projects have lasting effects on sustainable development.

38. An important emerging field of cooperation within the framework of South-South cooperation relates to leveraging frontier technologies to deliver sustainable development and the need for developing countries to address the impacts of those technologies and to mitigate their risks and adjustment costs. Developing countries can engage in capacity-building and raise awareness with respect to available policy options and best practices in order to learn from each other's experiences in implementing frontier technologies, on the basis of national circumstances and ownership, as well as cooperate to disseminate existing technologies.

39. Capacity-building and collaboration in public-private partnerships across the 17 Sustainable Development Goals is another important area of South-South cooperation. Countries of the South can share their experiences and best practices regarding policies and regulatory frameworks for such partnerships, including in respect of legislation, risk assessment models and contracts management.

40. The international community is increasingly recognizing the important role of South-South cooperation in achieving the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda and other international agreed development objectives.

41. In the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, Member States welcomed the increased contributions of South-South cooperation to poverty eradication and sustainable development, and

encouraged developing countries to voluntarily step up their efforts to strengthen South-South cooperation and to further improve its development effectiveness, in accordance with the provisions of the Nairobi outcome document of the High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation. Through the Nairobi outcome document, Member States also committed to strengthening triangular cooperation as a means of bringing relevant experience and expertise to bear in development cooperation.

42. In the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 (General Assembly resolution 69/283, annex II), Member States called for the further strengthening of South-South cooperation as a modality of partnership, with such partnerships playing an important role by supporting national capacities in disaster risk management and in improving the social, health and economic well-being of individuals, communities and countries.

43. At the sixth biennial high-level meeting of the Development Cooperation Forum (see E/2018/73), participants called upon countries and actors of the global South to be bolder in sharing their experiences and evidence regarding development cooperation, and for countries and actors of the global North to learn more from, and integrate the experience and expertise of, the global South into their practices.

44. According to the results of a 2017 survey of programme country Governments conducted by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, from 2015 to 2017, the proportion of developing countries providing development cooperation increased from 63 to 74 per cent. In 2017, 84 per cent of the countries providing South-South cooperation reported exchanging information on science, technology and innovation. That trend shows that the landscape of South-South and triangular cooperation is undergoing significant change, affecting not only the scope of development cooperation, but also the diversity of actors. Similarly, the survey showed a marked rise in the percentage of countries with developing country status, indicating that the United Nations had undertaken activities to support South-South or triangular cooperation therein, from 54 per cent in 2015 to 84 per cent in 2017 (see ibid., para. 39).

B. Challenges in and strengthening the institutional framework of South-South cooperation

Strengthening institutional capacities through South-South cooperation

45. South-South cooperation is an important tool for supporting the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals. Policymakers and international development practitioners are putting in place institutional mechanisms and enabling instruments at the national and regional levels, including South-South funds, manuals and guidelines for implementing South-South and triangular cooperation.

46. Some Southern countries have put in place national mechanisms and institutions to coordinate and implement South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation programmes and have begun to share their experiences. However, other countries are still confronting institutional challenges in effectively coordinating their national activities relating to South-South and triangular partnerships.

47. In recent years, the development of formal rules and informal norms and the emergence of dedicated organizations have moved South-South cooperation increasingly into the mainstream of policymaking at the national level. A growing number of countries have either created agencies dedicated to South-South cooperation or have enhanced South-South cooperation capacities within institutions dealing with international cooperation. In several instances, South-South and triangular cooperation have been anchored as an instrument of national foreign policy,

and Member States have set up institutional mechanisms either within their ministries of foreign affairs or as a separate entity. In recent years, Member States have made systematic efforts to create institutional structures for coordination, implementation and monitoring in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals. Often, those structures also coordinate South-South and triangular cooperation (see A/72/297).

48. The establishment of development cooperation agencies in the South is a relatively recent phenomenon, and they vary in terms of mandate and scope. While some have an extended mandate to formulate and influence foreign policy and diplomacy, others have a role that is limited to the implementation of projects. They also greatly differ in terms of their level of engagement in regional integration processes, involvement in multilateral structures, and engagement with intergovernmental bodies such as the United Nations and its agencies.

49. Some Member States have made several institutional advances, including with respect to the allocation of dedicated financial resources, the development of policy and regulatory frameworks, specialized personnel, and administrative and methodological innovations (see ibid.).

50. Along with a shift in operational focus towards impact assessment and evaluation by some national development cooperation agencies, there has been a variation in the approach to evaluation, from those that are purely technical in nature to those that reflect wider dimensions of development and sustainability and joint ownership considerations, among other things.

51. To leverage the potential of South-South and triangular cooperation in accelerating progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, institutional coordination mechanisms and capacities need to be further strengthened so that developing countries can put in place the necessary tools to provide and receive cooperation, to coordinate various projects and programmes, and to reduce transaction costs, avoid fragmentation and ensure that the development process is demand-driven.

52. Key efforts to develop the capacity of practitioners engaging in technical cooperation in middle-income countries and least developed countries include the project "Capacity Development in Management of South-South and Triangular Cooperation", implemented from 2012 to 2016 by the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, the Brazilian Cooperation Agency and the Japan International Cooperation Agency.[2] A total of 55 countries participated in the project's training courses. The initiative improved dialogue and collaboration among South-South cooperation practitioners and led to the launch of new South-South cooperation initiatives. It also improved collaboration and institutional arrangements at the national level and raised awareness of the importance of national mechanisms for the coordination of South-South cooperation.

53. At the United Nations level, the General Assembly, in its resolution 3251 (XXIX) of 4 December 1974, endorsed the establishment of a special unit within the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to promote technical cooperation among developing countries. With the adoption of Buenos Aires Plan of Action, the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation was strengthened in order to fulfil its primary mandate, as set out in Buenos Aires Plan of Action. Recognizing the importance of strengthening the Special Unit's responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency in facilitating South-South cooperation, with a view to sustaining the

[2] In the evaluation report, it was noted that the project was the first global project on capacity-building with respect to South-South cooperation management, and project activities had been essential to ensuring that the project was demand-driven and that it responded to the management needs of developing countries.

development efforts of developing countries and enhancing their participation in the global economy, the name of the Special Unit was changed to the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, pursuant to decision 17/1 of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation (see A/67/39, chap. I). UNDP continues to host the Office.

54. Member States recognize the important role of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation in coordinating, promoting and mainstreaming South-South and triangular cooperation on a regional, global and United Nations system-wide basis. In that context, they have also recommended that the role of Office be elevated to enable it to work effectively in responding to the needs of developing countries in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and to further strengthen its capacity to meet its system-wide responsibilities as a coordinator and facilitator (see A/67/39 and SSC/18/3).

55. In recent years, the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation has been supporting Member States and other partners in enhancing and expanding their South-South cooperation efforts through capacity-building. The Office has already entered into partnership agreements with national entities of 12 Member States, 23 United Nations system and intergovernmental organizations, and 12 civil society organizations, foundations and academic institutions.

56. An interagency survey conducted by the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation showed that the lack of a system-wide strategy on South-South cooperation was one of the main factors hindering optimal United Nations system support for South-South cooperation at the policy and operational levels. In response, and as I requested (see A/72/297), the Office and other United Nations entities are currently formulating a United Nations system-wide strategy on South-South cooperation to streamline work in that regard. Doing so will also facilitate close collaboration among resident coordinators, the Office, funds and programmes, and South-South cooperation units, with a view to matching the demand for South-South cooperation with available capacities and enabling South-South and triangular cooperation partnerships.

Reporting on the impact of South-South cooperation

57. The intensification and transformation of South-South cooperation have led to calls for better coordination, coherence and reporting. Notwithstanding the growth in the number of South-South cooperation projects and initiatives, data on their true scale, impact and scope, as well as lessons learned therefrom, are limited.

58. Generating estimates with respect to South-South cooperation remains complex and challenging, given its emphasis on non-financial modalities and the lack of comparability in the definitions and categories used for reporting. For example, country practices differ with regard to reporting the indirect and direct costs of their projects, as do their methodologies for calculating the grant element in official loans. Estimates of development cooperation from academic institutions and international organizations can differ from those from official sources. Moreover, non-financial modalities, including capacity-building, technology development and transfer, joint action for policy change and partnerships, which are significant components of South-South cooperation, are not easily quantifiable.

59. Further efforts to systematize and formalize South-South cooperation will require the development of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies and metrics for South-South cooperation.

60. Developing countries are making inroads in redefining methodologies and setting norms in development cooperation. The global South continues to emphasize

the imperative of focusing on impact/outcome analysis. Leaders of many emerging economies are still weighing the costs and benefits of standardizing Southern development cooperation, with many preferring flexibility and room for greater diversity of approaches to South-South cooperation.

61. At the global level, the United Nations system and other international organizations have greatly enriched the information available on Southern cooperation. The High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation, a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, provides a detailed account of the implementation of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action through the report of the Administrator of UNDP to its biennial sessions. The annual report of the Secretary-General on the state of South-South cooperation provides useful information on the contribution of such cooperation to sustainable development. The biennial report of the Secretary-General on trends and progress in international development cooperation, submitted to the Development Cooperation Forum for its consideration, also provides information on South-South cooperation.

62. Regional efforts at showcasing developments in Southern collaboration are also present. For example, the Ibero-American Programme to Strengthen South-South Cooperation has championed the enhancement of management methodologies for South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives in Latin America. Furthermore, the "Report on South-South Cooperation in Ibero-America 2017" presents a comprehensive and holistic account of South-South cooperation activities in Latin America, highlighting the importance of adopting metrics that go beyond a country's income in determining the status of its development cooperation. In the light of the successes of the aforementioned reporting initiative, in April 2018, a number of African countries partnered with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Planning and Coordinating Agency and the UNDP Regional Service Centre for Africa to pilot a South-South cooperation reporting initiative for Africa with a focus on technical cooperation.

63. Similarly, a consortium of partners, including Canada, Japan, Mexico, the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, the Islamic Development Bank and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development are leading an initiative on triangular cooperation under the auspices of the Global Partnership Initiative on Effective Triangular Cooperation. Working under the three work streams of advocacy, analytics and operations, the initiative aims to: analyse and systematize experiences and best practices; develop a set of voluntary principles; and consolidate frameworks for triangular cooperation to ensure country leadership and ownership and that partnerships for sustainable development are inclusive.

64. In line with changes in the global political and economic landscape, and the rise of Southern providers of development cooperation, there is an increased need for a harmonized framework for reporting on and evaluating the impact of South-South development cooperation. That calls for a common and coordinated approach to the effective consolidation of the diverse approaches and instruments that are available in the global South, as well as the strengthening of institutional capacities and mechanisms for cooperation.

C. Sharing experiences, best practices and success stories

65. Countries of the South that are on similar development pathways are sharing innovative, cost-effective and easily adaptable solutions with each other. Knowledge-sharing and peer-to-peer learning have become central tenets and are among the most dynamic components of South-South and triangular cooperation.

66. The exchange of development experiences between countries, through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation, has accelerated the adoption and adaptation of development solutions championed by countries of the South. There is substantive evidence showing that South-South and triangular cooperation have immense potential to accelerate the progress of countries in achieving all 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The effectiveness of such development cooperation can be further accelerated by facilitating effective knowledge-sharing platforms that encourage mutual learning like the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries.

67. Member States, development partners and other stakeholders have been increasingly willing to document best practices in South-South and triangular cooperation and to share the development solutions championed by the countries of the South.

68. Initiatives of Member States in sharing best practices range from setting up South-South centres and centres of excellence, to the development of a portfolio of best practices and experiences to promote mutual learning, to the production of digital "capacities catalogues" that compile information on best practices that are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals.

69. Regional and global initiatives have also been taken to promote the sharing of knowledge, successful experiences and best practices in the adaptation and implementation of the 2030 Agenda through South-South and triangular cooperation. A growing trend is the establishment of centres of excellence and trust funds to spur greater South-South cooperation among emerging economies and other developing countries. That trend reveals the role that dynamic Southern economies play in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals as they shoulder greater global responsibilities in accordance with the principles of South-South solidarity.

The role of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation in knowledge-sharing

70. The United Nations plays an important role as a broker of knowledge-sharing. Member States believe that the United Nations system should leverage that coordination expertise to ensure that best practices, lessons learned and other important experiential information related to South-South and triangular cooperation can be shared widely.

71. It should be noted that, currently, most knowledge exchange occurs at the bilateral level. Since that method of knowledge exchange is limited in scope, Member States therefore urge the United Nations system to support both regional and subregional organizations in developing centralized nodes for the dissemination of information.

72. It is well understood that there is already a wealth of knowledge on South-South cooperation and that Member States, United Nations entities, think tanks and other organizations require the means and infrastructure to collaborate. With that in mind, the use of online platforms for the dissemination of information can facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences. Online portals provide an accessible platform for engagement, which simultaneously ensures that all relevant information is securely digitized and archived for future use.

73. In response, the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, through its innovative web portal,[3] is engaging United Nations organizations and Member States. The portal showcases the work of numerous partners on South-South and triangular

[3] Available at www.unsouthsouth.org.

cooperation in their respective focus areas. It functions as a tool linking agencies and Governments to share knowledge, locate experts and undertake outreach and advocacy on issues of critical importance to the global South.

74. The South-South Solutions Database[4] is being expanded through inter-agency collaboration. In addition, the annual Global South-South Development Expo provides a platform for Member States, United Nations entities, the private sector, civil society organizations and all other partners to showcase Southern development solutions, share knowledge and lessons learned, network, collaborate and explore avenues for partnerships.

75. The United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation is also developing a global platform for sharing knowledge and brokering partnerships to respond more systematically and effectively to the demand by developing countries to connect and collaborate with potential partners. The platform will provide a space that systematizes knowledge-sharing, and is equipped to provide actionable solutions, strengthen capacity and foster valuable partnerships.

76. The "South-South in Action" publication series offers partners of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, including United Nations entities, Member States, intergovernmental organizations and civil society, a platform for sharing best practices from their South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives. Launched in 2016, this flagship series of reports is facilitating the building of a knowledge bank of successful South-South initiatives. Between 2016 and 2018, 12 "South-South in Action" publications have been launched, and more are in the pipeline.

77. In collaboration with Member States, United Nations entities and development partners, the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation has launched a compilation of lessons learned entitled "Good practices in South-South and triangular cooperation for sustainable development".[5] The compilation, which will be updated online on a rolling basis, features best practices from the global South that are relevant to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. It presents notable solutions at the national, subregional, regional and global levels to crucial challenges faced by developing countries in eradicating poverty, reducing inequality, supporting climate change action and creating peaceful and cohesive societies. Priority has been given to innovative initiatives that illustrate the central tenets of effective South-South and triangular cooperation, including initiatives that involve and benefit a great number of people in two or more Southern countries, that address transnational development challenges, that present solutions that have been piloted and scaled up, and that have tangible development outcomes that address the attainment of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The evidence gathered in the first volume aims to benefit developing countries that seek to scale up South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives, in particular with respect to widening the application of policies, strategies and programmes. The first volume presented 61 best practices. The second volume will expand upon and update the best practices and lessons learned that have been featured in the first.

[4] Available at www.unsouthsouth.org/resources/south-south-solutions-database.

[5] Available at https://www.unsouthsouth.org/library/publications/good-practices-in-sstc-for-sustainable-development/.

D. Scaling up the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda in support of South-South and triangular cooperation

South-South cooperation in trade, finance and investment

78. Achieving the 2030 Agenda and scaling up the means of implementation call for diverse forms of South-South and triangular cooperation, including technical cooperation, trade, investment, finance and infrastructure. Achieving catalytic results and accelerating progress towards the Goals also call for partnerships with and contributions from diverse stakeholders, including the private sector, civil society organizations, philanthropic organizations, academia and think tanks. A range of mechanisms at the national, regional and global levels and creative instruments will be required. In recent years, the scope of South-South and triangular cooperation has expanded well beyond technical cooperation and the exchange of knowledge to include trade, investment, infrastructure and connectivity.

79. Trade among the Southern countries is rapidly increasing. Since 2013, South-South trade in goods was valued at approximately $5 trillion dollars. More than 75 per cent of South-South trade was to or from countries in Asia, reflecting a degree of global integration in the region that diverges from that of other regions.[6]

80. Flows of foreign direct investment (FDI) between developing countries in the global South have also multiplied. FDI remains the largest external source of finance for developing economies. It makes up 39 per cent of total incoming finance in developing economies as a group. FDI flows to developed economies fell by one third, to $712 billion, while FDI inflows to developing economies remained close to their 2016 level, at $671 billion. The share of inward FDI stock for countries that are members of the Group of 20 increased from 57 per cent (2016) to 58 per cent (2017), accounting for 78 per cent of world gross domestic product. FDI inflows to Brazil, China, India and Indonesia increased from $58 to $63 billion, from $134 to $136 billion, from $40 to $44 billion, and from $4 to $23 billion, respectively.[7]

81. China's Belt and Road Initiative, the India-led International Solar Alliance and India's concessional lines of credit to African countries are key examples of South-South cooperation. India has approved nearly $28 billion in concessional credit (including around $10 billion for some 40 African partners) with a special emphasis on partnerships with least developed countries and small island developing States.

82. There is also a new wave of multilateral institutions that are devoted to South-South cooperation, especially the financing of such activities, including the recently established Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the New Development Bank. Both are significant facilitators for South-South cooperation, prioritizing sustainability and inclusive growth in their respective agendas. It is projected that the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank will provide loans totalling $10 to $15 billion annually over the next 15 years. Those investments will focus on the development of infrastructure and other productive sectors in Asia. It is estimated that the New Development Bank will be able to lend an average of $3.4 billion by 2020 and nearly $9 billion by 2034. The Bank's first five pipeline projects will focus on renewable energy.

83. The Islamic Development Bank introduced a "reverse linkage" mechanism in order to maximize the benefits derived from South-South cooperation and adequately address the emerging demands of its member countries. Reverse linkage is a South-South cooperation mechanism whereby member countries act as the primary agents in the provision of knowledge, technology and resources to build their individual

[6] United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), *Key Statistics and Trends in International Trade 2014*, (Geneva, 2015).

[7] UNCTAD, *World Investment Report 2018* (Geneva, 2018).

capacities and devise solutions for their autonomous development in a mutually beneficial, results-oriented and programme-based arrangement.[8]

84. The Andean Development Corporation is a key partner for sustainable development in its shareholder countries, in particular in financing infrastructure and projects that have reinforced integration among countries of the region. Three cities in the Andean region are participating in the Cities Footprint Project, developed in partnership with the Andean Development Corporation, which supports local governments in identifying actions and in designing and implementing development plans with a view to mitigating and adapting to climate change.

85. The number of actors in South-South and triangular cooperation has expanded, including subnational entities such as municipal and provincial governments and non-State actors such as civil society, private sector firms, volunteer groups, and academic and research institutions. Non-State actors are important stakeholders in development cooperation that can be instrumental in scaling up the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through South-South and triangular cooperation efforts. In many countries, national South-South cooperation strategies are anchored in national development plans and have evolved through inclusive partnerships with the private sector, civil society and academia. Those strategies provide key investment opportunities for sustainable development.

86. The private sector has the financial means, the human resources and the technological and innovative capacities to transform global challenges into inclusive and sustainable business opportunities. The private sector has been involved in the development of physical infrastructure projects funded by southern countries. Some countries have built strategic alliances with the private sector with the objective of increasing the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises and incorporating best practices in environmental sustainability.

South-South cooperation: A regional perspective

87. South-South cooperation is an important means of reinforcing regional cooperation among developing countries. Regional and interregional initiatives among developing countries are also important frameworks for promoting sustainable development cooperation across all regions.

88. In the Bali Declaration on Regional and Subregional Economic Cooperation of the Developing Countries, the countries of the South underlined the significant role of regional and subregional economic and technical cooperation in improving the welfare and standard of living of peoples in developing countries, thereby contributing to the efforts of the international community to eradicate poverty.

89. The Latin America and Caribbean region features several specialized international cooperation bodies that are focused on regional and subregional integration mechanisms. Examples include the international cooperation working group of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), the Group of High-level Authorities on South-South Cooperation of the Union of South American Nations, the international cooperation group of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), the cooperation working group of the Pacific Alliance, the specialized international cooperation of the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development, the Mesoamerican Integration and Development Project, the Committee on South-South Cooperation of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the meetings of heads of cooperation of the Ibero-American Conference. CELAC, which serves as a forum for political dialogue and agreement among 33 countries of the Latin America and the

[8] See http://tsdb-indonesia.org/product-and-service/reverse-linkage-south-south-cooperation/.

Caribbean, is now developing, with support from ECLAC, a regional cooperation policy that outlines development project priorities for South-South and triangular cooperation. That policy will enable the identification of areas for cooperation and activities that are conducive to promoting regional, subregional, bilateral and triangular cooperation programmes that will help to reduce asymmetries among developing countries while deepening the political dialogue on joint actions to achieve the 2030 Agenda through cooperation.

90. ECLAC has provided technical cooperation services to regional and subregional organizations to further strengthen their integration efforts and to increase intraregional trade among members of the Union of South American Nations and members of the Andean Community. An innovative example of interregional South-South cooperation is a trust fund jointly established by ECLAC and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) to support projects that promote interregional cooperation among stakeholders in Asia and Latin America on: trade and investment promotion; science, technology and innovation; infrastructure and transportation; public policies and public-private partnerships for sustainable growth; and public policies to reduce inequality and improve social cohesion.

91. Over the past decade, the countries of Latin America have participated in the implementation of 1,475 South-South cooperation initiatives and 159 triangular cooperation initiatives, with 101 regional South-South cooperation initiatives having been developed in 2015 and the engagement of Latin American countries in at least 378 South-South cooperation initiatives with other regions of the world.[9]

92. Since the inception of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, the use of the South-South cooperation modality in Africa has gained general acceptance and is being systematically mainstreamed.

93. At the regional level, the African Union has developed a number of continental technical institutions in line with the recommendations in the Buenos Aires Plan of Action on the pooling of resources for collective self-reliance.

94. During the same period, a number of regional economic communities were created in Africa, including the Economic Community of West African States, the Economic Community of Central African States, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the East African Community and the Southern African Development Community, all of which have the aim of gradual integration to promote economic development in the various subregions.

95. The creation of the World Trade Organization, the rise of a number of developing countries such as Brazil, China and India as emerging economies, and the creation of the African Union have generated new impetus for the implementation of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action in Africa. Aspects of the Plan of Action that were once overlooked have become more visible, as in the case for economic cooperation among developing countries.

96. In Africa, many countries have embraced economic cooperation among developing countries, the second pillar of South-South cooperation. Consequently, flows of investment among African countries have increased. Such intra-Africa investment has come mostly from the private sector and in some cases from parastatal entities. Some countries have also combined both technical and economic cooperation among developing countries through their development agencies, development funds

[9] Ibero-American General Secretariat, "Report on South-South Cooperation in Ibero-America 2017". Available at https://www.unsouthsouth.org/2017/12/18/report-on-south-south-cooperation-in-ibero-america-2017/.

and private investments. For example, South Africa has used its African Renaissance and International Cooperation Fund for technical cooperation to support peace and security operations in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, conserve cultural heritage in Mali, and to implement development projects in Guinea and the Central African Republic, and capacity- and institution-building projects in South Sudan.

97. The transformation of the Organization of African Unity into the African Union clearly marked the will of African leaders to accelerate their continental integration agenda. A number of institutions have been created to that end, some with clear development objectives, such as NEPAD, and others for governance review purposes, such as the African Peer Review Mechanism. Protocols for the establishment of the African Monetary Fund and the African Investment Bank have been adopted by the Assembly of the African Union with a view to deepening economic and financial integration.

98. The adoption of Agenda 2063 by African countries has increased the readiness of African countries and the continent as a whole to embrace more South-South cooperation initiatives and activities. Indeed, Agenda 2063 and its first 10-year implementation plan (2014–2023) have brought to the fore a new level of clarity in the objectives Africa has set for itself. African programmes on industrialization, such as the Action Plan for Accelerated Industrial Development of Africa; on infrastructure, such as the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa; on agriculture, such as the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme; as well as major agreements recently signed on the African Continental Free Trade Area and the Single African Air Transport Market, clearly indicate that Africa is ready for South-South cooperation on new terms on the continent and with other regions.

99. External factors also have also contributed to the evolution of the implementation of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action. A number of partnership agreements between Africa and major developing countries have been developed under the auspices of the African Union. Cooperation between Africa and China has been piloted through the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. Through the Forum, discussions have been held collectively, while implementation has been carried out between individual African countries and China. The collective bargaining strategy used in the Forum has persuaded partners to be more attentive to the requests made by African countries.

100. Cooperation between the African Union and the League of Arab States has been modelled on that between the African Union and European Union, wherein cooperation between the two regions follows a similar pattern of collective bargaining and country implementation.

101. The creation of the India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum and the collective known as BRICS (Brazil, Russia Federation, India, China and South Africa) has brought new opportunities for South-South cooperation to African countries. While the Dialogue Forum has largely focused on technical cooperation activities with development impact, BRICS institutions, including the New Development Bank, will provide African countries the possibility of accessing another source of financing through loans.

102. South-South cooperation is one of the important drivers of regional cooperation in Asia and the Pacific and has resulted in increased volumes of South-South trade, foreign direct investment flows and technology transfers. Middle-income developing countries, as cooperation providers, have significantly influenced the landscape of South-South cooperation in Asia and the Pacific and beyond. The region has a mix of international development cooperation players, including China and India, the region's economic powerhouses. The diversity in levels of development across the

region provides unique opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation between countries and for mutual learning.[10]

103. Modalities of South-South cooperation in Asia and the Pacific include funding and technical assistance (in-kind assistance) aimed at developing human and institutional capacities, by building expertise and knowledge, providing training and advisory services, and carrying out study visits and technology transfers. The greatest strength of South-South cooperation has been its diversity of forms and flows. For that reason, rather than have a one-size-fits-all approach, cooperation must be carefully crafted and tailored to the needs of partner countries.[11]

104. Several development cooperation arrangements exist in Asia and the Pacific, most significant among which are the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation, the Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal Initiative and the Pacific Islands Development Forum.

105. In Asia and the Pacific, subregional cooperation arrangements could serve as entry points for scaled up South-South cooperation. To that end, the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation is cooperating with the ASEAN secretariat and the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism of ESCAP to document South-South cooperation among ASEAN countries, with a view to extending such mapping to other subregional cooperation arrangements.

106. The Arab States tend to see South-South cooperation as a more cost-effective option compared to traditional models of cooperation and have historically asserted themselves as proponents of the South-South model of cooperation. That has been expressed through the creation of cooperation mechanisms, regional development banks, funds and other financial instruments for development.[12]

107. While some countries in the Arab States region have high per-capita incomes, others are middle-income countries or least developed countries. Traditionally, more than 80 per cent of Arab South-South cooperation has involved other Arab States through bilateral, regional and multilateral channels. Outside the region, Africa and Central and Eastern Europe are the main partners.

108. South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation undertaken by Arab States typically involves middle-income countries and least developed countries. Collaboration in the region is delivered mainly through training, study tours and other knowledge-sharing initiatives that help to build the capacity of partners to take leadership of their own development pathways. Structured capacity-building initiatives are increasingly being prioritized through regular funding, long-term relationships, knowledge transfer and other instruments for capacity development.

109. Public-private partnerships and specialized funds also feature among the main instruments used to facilitate South-South cooperation in the Arab States region. While economic cooperation remains solidly at the forefront, cooperation is also moving forward in social sectors, with opportunities emerging to forge substantive and operational links between the two.

[10] Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, "South-South Cooperation in Asia and the Pacific: A brief overview" (Bangkok, 2018). Available at https://www.unescap.org/events/regional-south-south-cooperation.

[11] Ibid.

[12] United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation "South-South and triangular cooperation: Towards sustainable human development in the Arab States", (2017). Available from http://www.arab-ecis.unsouthsouth.org/2017/11/27/south-south-and-triangular-cooperation-towards-sustainable-human-development-in-the-arab-states/.

110. The European Union recognizes the potential that South-South and triangular cooperation offer for poverty eradication and sustainable development.

111. Pursuant to article 3.9 of regulation 233/2014 of 11 March 2014, the European Union shall support, as appropriate, the implementation of bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation and dialogue, the development dimension of partnership agreements, and triangular cooperation, as well as promote South-South cooperation.

112. Pursuant to the New European Consensus on Development, the European Union and its Member States will develop new partnerships with more advanced developing countries in order to promote the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through a broader range of cooperation. Those new partnerships will promote the exchange of best practices, technical assistance and knowledge sharing. In addition, the European Union and its Member States will work with those countries to promote South-South and triangular cooperation consistent with development effectiveness principles.

United Nations support for South-South cooperation

113. In recent decades, the United Nations system has also been strengthening its policy, programmatic and institutional support for South-South cooperation. United Nations entities have taken a number of measures to further mainstream South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation into their policy frameworks and corporate strategies towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. South-South cooperation now frequently appears in United Nations repositories of best practices and lessons learned and in policy and programmatic instruments. To boost their South-South cooperation initiatives, some agencies have also allocated dedicated funds and/or recruited specialists, not only at their respective headquarters, but also increasingly at the country and regional levels.

114. The framework of operational guidelines on United Nations support to South-South cooperation (see SSC/19/3), which is a tool and reference manual on ways to mainstream South-South and triangular cooperation in the planning and programming of United Nations entities, defines South-South cooperation as:

> A process whereby two or more developing countries pursue their individual and/or shared national capacity development objectives through exchanges of knowledge, skills, resources and technical know-how, and through regional and interregional collective actions, including partnerships involving Governments, regional organizations, civil society, academia and the private sector, for their individual and/or mutual benefit within and across regions. South-South cooperation is not a substitute for, but rather a complement to, North-South cooperation.

115. The framework also provides an operational definition for triangular cooperation as Southern-driven partnerships between two or more developing countries, supported by one or more developed countries or multilateral organizations, to implement development cooperation programmes and projects.

116. The most recent report of the Secretary-General on the State of South-South Cooperation (A/73/321) focuses specifically on support that the United Nations development system has provided to the South-South initiatives of Member States at the national, regional and global levels, with a view to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and related international agreements.

117. United Nations entities are increasingly incorporating South-South and triangular cooperation into their policies and programmes that draw on the expertise, experience, technology and many other resources that are available in the developing world. Moreover, Member States are increasingly receiving support from United Nations entities to convene South-South policy dialogues, which serve as a wellspring

of ideas on how best to eradicate poverty and address other internationally agreed development goals.

118. Whereas most United Nations entities and Member States coordinate projects on an individual basis, the extended mandate granted to the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation has resulted in the establishment of a United Nations system-wide mechanism to mainstream those efforts and to ensure coherence and better coordination. That not only allows for increased and more effective South-South cooperation, but also supports Member States and United Nations entities in communicating information on the impact and contribution of South-South cooperation to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

119. Frameworks for development cooperation that have been implemented in programme countries, such as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and United Nations country programme action plans, are important instruments for planning development activities. United Nations country teams are already using those instruments to strengthen South-South and triangular cooperation activities, but Member States are asking for a scaling up of such activities, with a view to developing national and subnational capacities through the use of local resources, exchanges of national and international experts, and activities to strengthen institutions.

120. Despite making considerable progress in its support for South-South cooperation, reviews of the United Nations system in that regard have called for enhanced coherence in policies and approaches. The General Assembly, in its resolution 72/237, requested the Chair of the United Nations Development Group to make specific recommendations on additional support that United Nations system organizations and all States could provide for South-South and triangular cooperation.

121. In that resolution, the General Assembly also requested the establishment of a more formalized and strengthened inter-agency mechanism, coordinated by the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation. The aim would be to galvanize and further mainstream joint support for South-South and triangular initiatives and to share information on development activities and results achieved by various organizations through their respective business models in support of South-South and triangular cooperation.

122. The United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation has established an inter-agency mechanism that will coordinate the preparation of the United Nations system-wide strategy and the contribution to the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation. More than 30 United Nations entities have already designated South-South focal points, who will work to strengthen inter-agency information flows, share best practices and discuss legal frameworks and funding mechanisms.

Scaling up United Nations support for South-South cooperation

123. Member States, having noted that the increased involvement of the United Nations system in South-South and triangular cooperation has brought significant results, have nevertheless called for the further alignment and strengthening of its capacity in order to further improve impact evaluation and learning mechanisms. That can be achieved through mainstreaming South-South cooperation as an implementation modality within the United Nations development system.

124. The United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation has a critical role to play in further advancing and strengthening South-South and triangular cooperation through mobilizing the collective efforts of developing countries. The leadership and United Nations system-wide coordination role of the Office was appreciated by

respondents to questionnaires administered as part of the progress report on the recommendations contained in the review of South-South and triangular cooperation in the United Nations system that was conducted by the Joint Inspection Unit (A/73/311/Add.1). Suggestions were made therein for enhancement in two main areas: resource mobilization and knowledge-sharing.

125. Member States recognize the need to mobilize adequate resources for enhancing South-South and triangular cooperation, and therefore call for strengthened support from all development partners for the United Nations Fund for South-South Cooperation, the India, Brazil and South Africa Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation, the India-United Nations Development Partnership Fund and the Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund for South-South Cooperation. In that regard, the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation and relevant entities should provide technical support and guidance to developing countries in order to facilitate their access to those funds. They further call upon all relevant United Nations organizations to consider increasing allocations of human, technical and financial resources in support of South-South cooperation.

126. The United Nations has been identified as being able to bridge financial and non-financial modalities of cooperation by working with South-South development cooperation partners, international financial institutions and other sources of financial support. The United Nations system can encourage other modalities of development cooperation in order to help other countries benefit from Southern providers and to mobilize more resources for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Moreover, the United Nations system can help in closing inequality gaps between and within countries when promoting other forms of cooperation.

127. Having noted that the private sector possesses the financial means, the human resources and the technological and innovative capacities to transform global challenges into inclusive and sustainable business opportunities, the United Nations system has been encouraged to consider the participation of new actors, including the private sector, to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

128. In order to achieve the ambitious goals of the 2030 Agenda, the contribution of all stakeholders and the utilization of all means are required. South-South cooperation is poised to play an ever-increasing role in sustainable development, and countries of the South and the North are encouraged to further step up their efforts to match the potential of South-South and triangular cooperation.

129. South-South cooperation is reshaping the global cooperation architecture for sustainable development, and many countries of the South, with their enhanced productive capacities and their contribution to the global economic growth, trade and investment, have become important players in the global economy and providers of international cooperation for sustainable development.

130. South-South cooperation has embraced a multi-stakeholder approach that brings together Member States, including their local constituents, the United Nations system, the private sector, civil society organizations, philanthropic organizations, academia and other actors, with the aim of mobilizing all available resources and partnerships in line with the national development strategies and plans of Southern countries. The capacity of the United Nation to support South-South cooperation should be further strengthened and aligned with the priorities of national Governments.

131. While the contribution of South-South cooperation to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda has been recognized globally, evidence of its impact is limited since

reporting in that regard has not been carried out systematically. The establishment of a voluntary reporting mechanism by Member States to the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation could play a major role in mapping, documenting and sharing experiences and best practices, as well in fostering partnerships. The adoption of agreed methodologies for and approaches to reporting, while taking into account the specificities and different modalities of South-South cooperation, will enhance comparability and peer-learning among developing countries. I encourage Member States to explore the possibility of engaging in consultations towards the adoption of common conceptual frameworks and common methodologies for voluntary reporting while respecting the diversity of national approaches to South-South cooperation. That will facilitate the assessment of the impact of South-South and triangular cooperation with the ultimate objective of furthering their contribution to sustainable development.

132. United Nations entities continue to leverage their support for South-South cooperation through its mainstreaming into their corporate strategies and operations that are aimed at assisting in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. United Nations agencies, funds and programmes are also increasingly allocating dedicated funds and human resources to boost their South-South cooperation initiatives at the headquarters, country and regional levels. To enhance the United Nations support for South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation towards achieving the 2030 Agenda, I have asked the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation to prepare a United Nations system-wide South-South cooperation strategy. The preparatory process for the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, its deliberations and its outcome document will provide further guidance for the development of the finalized system-wide strategy before the end of 2019.

133. As South-South and triangular cooperation become more dynamic and expand in scale, scope and complexity, and as the number of actors multiply, the demand for enhanced coordination, advocacy and partnerships will also increase. In that context, it is of paramount importance to reinforce the institutional set-up of South-South and triangular cooperation at all levels. I call upon Member States to consider strengthening the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation as a separate entity within UNDP, given its mandate as the United Nations focal point to coordinate, facilitate and promote South-South and triangular cooperation globally and on a United Nations system-wide basis, and its pivotal role in mainstreaming and integrating South-South and triangular cooperation into development strategies and in furthering South-South and triangular cooperation as important modalities of international cooperation for sustainable development (see A/67/39).

134. Triangular cooperation complements South-South cooperation by supporting adapted, innovative and flexible solutions to overcome today's most pressing environmental, economic and social challenges, and by ensuring sustainable development in Southern countries. It can also assist in delivering impactful development cooperation by creating strong, horizontal partnerships for sustainable development results. There is a need to better understand triangular cooperation, to determine its relative merits among the range of instruments and modalities of sustainable development, and to provide more evidence and rigorous information on its scale, scope and impact.